Chapter 10

Turf Racing

Did you ever see the movie "The Godfather"? Did you ever read the novel? They have much in common, but no discerning audience would ever confuse one with the other. They are two distinct art forms to be understood and appreciated in quite different ways. The same is true for dirt and turf racing. Consequently, the analysis of turf races requires a unique paradigm, which will be detailed after a brief historical perspective.

Many racing scholars consider St Simon, foaled in 1881, to be the greatest thoroughbred horse of all time. Unable to compete in the English classics due to a quirk in the racing laws (a horse was not eligible to compete if its owner had died before the race), St Simon was undefeated in ten races, often winning by twenty lengths or more while under stout restraint. His regular rider, Fred Archer, the best jockey of 19th century England, and his trainer, Matthew Duncan, were both associated with several classic horses. Archer would later ride the 16-time winner and undefeated English Triple Crown champion Ormonde, but still thought that St Simon was in a league by himself. Duncan claimed that St Simon was as good at one furlong as he was at three miles, and trained him to win at distances from six furlongs to the 2-1/2 miles of the Ascot Gold Cup.

Unlike many top class horses, St Simon went on to an outstanding career at stud. He was the leading sire nine times and the top broodmare sire six times. In 1900, his sons and daughters captured all five of

the English classics (2000 Guineas, Derby, St Leger, 1000 Guineas and the Oaks). But for some time, St Simon's direct male descendants were unable to pass on the superior traits of their ancestor, and the St Simon line was in danger of dying out until Prince Rose surfaced. Prince Rose was killed by artillery fire during the Normandy invasion, but his progeny breathed new life into the St Simon line. His best-known son, Princequillo, had been fortuitously transported to the United States a few years earlier.

Princequillo was a long distance specialist, but also passed on a fair amount of speed to his descendants. With the possible exception of Northern Dancer, Princquillo has had the greatest impact on American turf breeding over the last 50 years. From his sons Prince John and Round Table came Poker, Stage Door Johnny, King's Bishop and numerous others who have left an indelible mark on turf pedigrees. Princequillo was also a very productive broodmare sire, with the legendary Secretariat being his crowning achievement in that arena.

At **EQUIFORM**, we are not experts on pedigrees, conformation, webbed feet, the proverbial "daisy cutting action", or other genetic factors that produce good turf runners. But we do know how to apply our numbers to identify horses that will perform well on the turf.

Early speed, usually an asset on the dirt, is not nearly as beneficial on the grass. In fact, the distinguishing feature of most good grass horses is the ability to distribute the bulk of their energy late in the race. That is why our grass pace numbers tend to be lower than their dirt counterparts. Equiform doesn't normalize turf pace numbers to make them comparable with dirt pace numbers. That would mask the very essence of turf racing. By reporting the actual, variant-adjusted velocities, Equiform is able to properly evaluate the real dynamics of racing on the green.

Top grass riders usually show restraint (sometimes, too much), favoring a good trip near the inside over prominent early position. Having rationed their mount's energy, these superior riders have a knack for unleashing its reserves at just the right time. Without a doubt, riding on the lawn requires more skill than riding on the dirt. Backing apprentices or weak riders on the dirt, especially in sprints, is often not a problem. After all, if the horse is the speed of the race and in condition,

all the apprentice has to do is get him cleanly out of the gate and hang on. It doesn't work that way on the grass. Superior grass riders possess patience, a keen sense of pace, and the courage to accelerate through a momentary opening. These skills take time to master. That is why bug-boys and less skilled riders win such a low percentage of grass races on the major circuits.

Turf Pace Lows and the TD Line

Given these major differences between dirt and turf racing, Equiform employs a unique methodology for each surface. While the new pace top is the most common dirt pattern signaling improved condition, its corollary on the turf is the **turf pace low**.

The new pace top isolates horses that are running better in the most stressful segment of dirt races. The turf pace low (TPL) serves a similar purpose in grass races. The "real racing" in most grass affairs usually occurs after the first half mile has already been run (short turf sprints excluded). The ability to accelerate late in the race is the key to success on the turf, and **THE XTRAS** provide data to help the handicapper assess this ability.

The **turf decline line** is a potent subset of the turf pace low. The turf decline line (TD line) is defined as a decrease in successive turf pace numbers of at least six points to a turf pace low, with the associated final numbers within two points of each other. This pattern points out horses that are noticeably improving their finishing ability. If they are going slower early, but running roughly the same final number, they are finishing better. This is a powerful conditioning angle on the weeds.

Take a look at Stetson Lady (page 116) in the fourth race at Santa Anita on March 29, 2001. She opened her five year-old campaign with three finals right around 70, and didn't improve much until December, when she hit a 73- final top. After a 74/70 to start 2001, she ran a 64/71- in her next race. The big drop to a turf pace low (64) while running almost the same final number is a particularly strong pattern. It is analogous to a significant pace top on the dirt.

Stetson Lady was sitting on a big effort. The public made Guthrun

(page 117) the favorite at 2/1, followed by Glorious Linda (page 118) at 3/1. Neither of them had run a faster final number than Stetson Lady's 73-, and more importantly, did not exhibit any condition patterns. Maybe the presence of Revillew Slew and Salish Slew, also front-running types, suggested Stetson Lady would be compromised by the pace scenario. However, we have learned that horses in top form often overcome these match-up or race-shape deficiencies. Stetson Lady stalked the early leader, Salish Slew, battled that one through the stretch, and got up by a neck at $26.20. Guthrun, as is her wont, broke slowly, and was never a factor, while Glorious Linda was a late-rallying third.

The eighth race at the Fairgrounds on January 6, 2001, featured an extremely competitive field going about a mile on the grass. On strictly a final number basis, six or seven horses appeared capable of hitting 73 to 74. The crowd had such difficulty sorting them out, that Frankly Classic was established as the tepid favorite at almost 9/2. But there was only one horse, Eltawaasul (page 119) coming off a TD line. Note the drop-off to a new TPL. Nat's Big Party also had a nice look, coming off a **cyclical pace low** (CPL) of 51 (page 120). Since Eltawaasul was a lightly raced 5yo with more upside potential, I bet him to win and boxed him with Nat's Big Party in the exacta. The following comments from the January 14, 2001 *Racing Form Charts Weekly* tell the story.

> **Eltawaasul** saved ground early, moved out before the second turn, rallied five wide turning for home, and out-kicked **Private Power** to the wire. Private Power settled early, rallied five wide around the second turn, closed gamely and was out-kicked to the wire. **Nat's Big Party**, unhurried early, split foes while advancing around the second turn, angled out for the drive, closed gamely but was too late.

Note that the chart caller used the phrases "out-kicked" and "closed gamely". This finishing ability delivers the goods on the grass.

A spectacular example of the turf pace low occurred on February 16, 2001 in the fourth race at Gulfstream Park (see pages 121-122). The 9/5 public choice, Afternoon Rose, was off a final number top and rated to bounce back to the 68/69 area. I was looking for a filly that

could get to that range at a better price. Certainly, coming off a turf pace low with some good 2yo final numbers to back it up, Candy Mint had to be played at 4/1. But two other horses intrigued me. Where's Cielo was on a TD line with some 67's as a 2yo, and Tanallover had just run a turf pace low with a 66- as a 2yo. It is not uncommon for young horses to move up a few final points off these patterns, so I also placed small win wagers on these two long shots. Tanallover improved to a 68" final and paid $186.40. Any method can tab a long shot now and then, but knowing that the TD line or the TPL can produce this type of explosion will enable you to envision some of these "bombs" on the grass.

As with the new pace top on the dirt, the TPL or TD line may be operative off a delay (intervening dirt race, excuse, layoff, etc). After debuting with a 65/63- on the Saratoga lawn, Fiddle (page 123) turned in two dismal runs on the dirt. Trainer Allen Jerkens returned her to the grass in a stakes race, and Fiddle responded with a 54/64", creating a TD line. After a freshening, Fiddle resurfaced in a maiden special race at Gulfstream Park on January 7, 2001, and paid $48.00 while advancing to a 69+ final. Horses can improve dramatically between their two and three year-old seasons, and the TD line provides a big clue as to the timing of these moves.

Whenever a horse runs a turf pace low, one should give it a second look. Neither Castle Comer (page 124) nor Answer To Me (page 125), was on a TD line in the following examples (the final number difference of successive grass races was not two points or less), but both were off **delayed pace lows**.

After a running a TPL (55) on June 18, Castle Comer followed up with a dirt pace top on June 27 while fading badly. Returned to the weeds, he won comfortably at 3/1 while improving to a 70+.

Answer To Me was coming off a double delay after a mid-August TPL (50). Note that he reversed in his September dirt race (a good sign for a grass horse), and after another dirt effort, was put back on the grass on November 2, and won by almost five lengths.

Horses making their first start on grass require special handling. Ten or twenty years ago, a handicapper with access to good pedigree information enjoyed a sizable edge in these situations. Whether it was

Tomlinson ratings (now available in the *Racing Form*), Bloodstock Research's American Produce Records (then a 20 volume set – now available on CD ROM) or consulting trainer statistics, a player willing to do the work could find some superb plays. Obviously, as this information became more available to the public, its wagering value diminished.

These guides are still helpful, but there are other ways to retain an edge with first time grass horses. Identifying superior grass sires before they become well known via Tomlinson etc can be a rewarding first step. If you take the time to peruse the result charts of grass races around the country, you will sometimes notice a relatively obscure sire producing a few turf winners at boxcar mutuels. Be on the lookout for the progeny of these sires before they are tabulated in the guides and made available to the public. This approach with Diesis and several others allowed me to cash several nice tickets before their ability for producing good grass runners became well established.

The second, and more common method is to use the Equiform numbers to predict which horses are likely to handle the surface switch effectively. Since success on the grass usually requires the late distribution of energy, we prefer horses that have exhibited that tendency on the dirt, as long as they have some semblance of a grass pedigree.

Lightly raced horses that run compression lines on the dirt are often able to adapt immediately to the demands of turf racing. So too are older horses that frequently run dirt pace numbers lower than their final numbers or are exhibiting this pattern in recent races. These types of horses have shown a tendency for distributing most of their energy later in the race, the hallmark of success on the lawn.

Take a look at Theres No Tomorrow (page 126) in the eighth race at Bay Meadows on May 10, 2001, a maiden claimer at a mile on the turf. This filly had never been on the grass, but her final number progression as a four year-old caught my eye. The improvement was incremental and steady, but more importantly, her last two route spreads were (-2) and (-7).

Before these last two races, she had only run one other negative dirt spread, that being the 58/61- reversal in March of her three year-old season. She was obviously learning to distribute her energy later in the race, and with that profile and facing a weak field, I thought she had a

reasonable chance in her initial grass foray. After lagging behind early, Theres No Tomorrow rallied to a $17.00 victory.

Unlike a dirt spread, a **turf spread** is a positive number when the final number is *higher* than the pace number. The turf spread is calculated by subtracting the pace number from the final number (final number minus pace number). If a horse's debut race was on the turf and it runs a turf spread of plus ten points (+10) or more while earning a competitive final number, give it serious consideration in its next grass attempt. Since grass races tend to go slower than dirt races in the early stages, this type of spread for a one-number turf horse is similar to a dirt compression line. Horses coming off these opening plus ten point or more turf spreads have demonstrated an affinity for the lawn, and often move up considerably next time out.

Cathode, Take My Note and Cherokee Kim (page 127) typify this look, and all three won their next race. Note that Cathode and Cherokee Kim had run dirt compression lines in their debuts, another signal they might like the turf.

In general, when evaluating lightly raced turf horses, give the edge to the contender with the best turf spread, all else being equal. In addition, if the early pace looks contentious, I might prefer a slower final number horse with a superior spread (56/70 over 65/71).

Another pattern to look for with youngsters is a gradual decline in turf pace numbers with relatively consistent final numbers. Although not as powerful as the TD line, the incremental improvement in finishing ability is a positive sign.

STETSON LADY   (118)

```
4TH SAX MARCH 29 - 1 MILE TURF
              4              |            5            |            6
D
e                           | HO    =73-w      (69)=   |
c                           | HO      66+    64(70)    |
N
o
v
O                           | SA      =64+     (74)=   |
c                           |
t                           | SA      =62-    (77)=    |
S
e
P DM        59    60(62)     | DM    =68"       (73)=   |
A                           | DM    =71+w      (73)=   |
u DM      =68      (68)=     |
g
J                           | DM    =69-       (76)=   |
u
l                           |
J                           | HO    =70"       (78)=   |
u                           |
n                           | HO    =70-       (68)=   |
M                           | HO    =70+       (79)=   |
a
y
A
p
r
M                           |                          | -->
a
r
F
e                           |                          | SA  =^71-w     (64)=
b
J                           |                          |
a                           |                          | SA    =70      (74)=
n
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EQUIFORM™ Pg: 16   **GUTHRUN (FR)**   **(118)**   THE XTRAS™

4TH SAX MARCH 29 - 1 MILE TURF

2	3	4

```
D
e
c
N   GG    =69+     (64)=
o
v
O
c
t   SA    =70-w    (73)=
S
e
p
A   DM       66"  66(73)63
u
g
J   DM    =68"     (57)=
u
l
J
u
n   HO    =71      (62)=
M
a
y
A
p
r
M                          -->
a
r
F
e
b   SA    =72-     (74)=
J
a
n   SA   =72"      (66)=
```

`4TH SAX MARCH 29 - 1 MILE TURF`

Month	5		6		7	
D			SA =73-w	(63)=		
e						
c			HO =71	(61)=		
N						
o						
v			SA =72-	(64)=		
O			SA =72+w	(60)=		
c			SA =69+	(75)=		
t						
S						
e						
p						
A						
u			DM =69-	(66)=		
g			DM =70	(61)=		
J						
u						
l						
J						
u			HO =72-	(60)=		
n						
M						
a						
y			HO =71-	(61)=		
A			SA =71+	(73)=		
p	SA =71+w	(62)=				
r						
M	SA =^72"w	(66)=			-->	
a						
r			SA =.73-	(71)=		
	SA =71	(64)=				
F						
e					SA =^73-w	(61)=
b	SA =^73-	(61)=				
J						
a			SA =72-	(65)=		
n						

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 77 **ELTAWAASUL (114)** THE XTRAS™

8TH FGX JANUARY 6 - 1 MILE ABOUT TURF

3	4	5

D
e
c

FG   =72+   (56)=

N
o
v

O
c
t

BE   =71"   (78)=

S
e
p

A
u
g

SR   =:72+   (64)=

J
u
l

BE =74"   (70)=

J
u
n

MP   =72-   (65)=

M
a
y

A
p
r

M
a
r

F
e
b

J
a
n

-->

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 86   **NAT'S BIG PARTY   (117)**   THE XTRAS™

8TH FGX JANUARY 6 - 1 MILE ABOUT TURF

	5		6		7
D e c					
N o v	AQ =74+	(67)=	FG =72	(51)=	
O c t	AQ =73"	(60)=	AQ =70	(69)=	
			BE =74-	(55)=	
S e p	BE =^76-	(61)=	ME =75-w	(69)=	
			SR =73	(59)=	
A u g	SR ^69" 66 (65)		SR =:75-	(57)=	
	SR =75+	(64)=			
J u l	BE =75w	(60)=			
	BE =74	(58)=	BE =74"	(58)=	
J u n	BE =73	(63)=	BE =72"w	(57)=	
M a y	BE =73-w	(60)=	BE =70+	(61)=	
	BE /69 67 (67)				
A p r	AQ =73+w	(66)=	AQ =72+	(61)=	
M a r			GP =71"	(50)=	
F e b			GP =74	(60)=	
J a n			GP =70"	(60)=	

-->

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 68   **AFTERNOON ROSE   (119)**

6TH GPI FEBRUARY 16 - 1 1/16 MILES ABOUT TURF

	2		3	
D CR	-66+w	(58) -		
e				
b			-->	
			GP -70	(62) -
J				

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 65   **TANALLOVER   (115)**

6TH GPI FEBRUARY 16 - 1 1/16 MILES ABOUT TURF

	2		3	
D CR	-64-	(70) -		
e				
c				
N CR	-^66-w	(77) -		
o				
v CR	-65-	(71) -		
O				
c				
t				
S CN	-61+	(64) -		
e CN	-65+	(74) -		
P				
A				
u				
g LR	49+	(55) 64		
J LR	57+	(62) 72		
u LR	48+	(55) 67		
e			-->	
b			GP -65-	(59) -
J				
a			GP -62-	(65) -

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 58   **WHERE'S CIELO**   **(115)**

6TH GPI FEBRUARY 16 - 1 1/16 MILES ABOUT TURF

	2		3	
D				
e	CR -^65-	(62) -		
c				
N				
o				
v	LR -67	(67) -		
O				
c	CN 56"	58 (69) 69		
t				
S				
e	CN -^67-w	(54) -		
p				
A	DE -64	(60) -		
u				
g				
J	LR 55+	(63) 73		
u				
l				
	LR 51+	(59) 66		
e			-->	
b				
J			GP -65+	(51) -
a			GP -66"	(64) -

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 66   **CANDY MINT**   **(117)**

6TH GPI FEBRUARY 16 - 1 1/16 MILES ABOUT TURF

	2		3	
D				
e	CR -^65	(64) -		
C	CR 53+ 63	(71)		
N				
o				
v	CR -68*w	(68) -		
O				
c	CR -69"	(62) -		
J	CR ^55-	(65) 74		
e			-->	
b				
J			GP -69"	(51) -

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 81   **FIDDLE**   (115)   THE XTRAS™

9TH GPX FEBRUARY 9 - 1 1/16 MILES TURF

	2	3		

D
e
c

N
o
v

O
c
t

BE   =64"   ^50–$_{56}$ (54)=
BE   =64"   ^50–$_{56}$ (68)=

S
e
p

BE   47–$_{55}$ (66)

SR   =63–   (65)=

A
u
g

J
u
l

J
u
n

M
a
y

A
p
r

M
a
r

F
e
b

--->

J
a

n   GP   =69+w   (63)=

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 62   **CASTLE COMER   (116)**   THE XTRAS™

`9TH CRC DECEMBER 27 - 1 1/8 MILES TURF`

	2		3		
D **e** **c**			`-->`		
N **AQ**	52	$_{56}$(58)	CR =68"	(55)=	
O **ME**	61-	$_{58}$(62)	CR =^67	(62)=	
v					
O					
c			CR =68-	(57)=	
t ME	51	(61)$_{57}$			
S					
e					
p			CR =71+w	(58)=	
A			CR =^69-	(58)=	
u					
g					
J			CR =^70+w	(66)=	
u					
l					
J			CR ^60"	$_{65}$(70)	
u			CR =^68+	(55)=	
n					
M			GP =66-	(61)=	
a			GP =65	(60)=	
y					
A					
p			GP 53"	$_{54}$(58)	
r					
M			GP 58	$_{55}$(57)	
a					
r			GP 58+	$_{58}$(62)	
F					
e			GP 65	$_{59}$(57)	
b					
J					
a					
n			AQ 47-	(56)$_{45}$	

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 78   **ANSWER TO ME   (114)**   THE XTRAS™

9TH CRC DECEMBER 31 - 1 1/16 MILES TURF

	2		3		
Dec	CR 64+w	(70)$_{73}$	-->		
Nov			CR ^72w $_{65}$(65)		
Oct			CR =72-w (68)=		
Oct			CR 70 $_{66}$(69)		
Sep	CR /57"	(66)$_{80}$			
Sep	CR 60- $_{62}$	(73)$_{80}$	CR ^74+w $_{66}$(70)		
Aug	CR 58"	(67)$_{58}$	CR =66- (50)=		
Jul			CR /68 $_{66}$(74)		
Jun			CR =68"w (65)=		
May			CR =64+ (62)=		
May			GP =71" (61)=		
Apr			GP 62+ (71)$_{60}$		
Apr			GP 62 (72)$_{79}$		
Feb			GP 55- (71)$_{78}$		
Jan					

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 43   **THERES NO TOMORROW   (123)**   THE XTRAS™

8TH RACE BM MAY 10TH - 1 MILE TURF - Three Year Olds 115 lbs.

```
        |          2          |              3              |          4
--------+---------------------+-----------------------------+---------------------
D       |                     | GG    61-        (65)65      |
e       |                     | GG    64         (69)65      |
c  GG      56-    (58)57      |                             |
N       |                     |                             |
o       |                     | GG      57"      (65)58      |
v       |                     |                             |
O       |                     |                             |
c       |                     |                             |
t       |                     | BM      57"      (62)61      |
S       |                     |                             |
e       |                     |                             |
p       |                     |                             |
A       |                     |                             |
u       |                     |                             |
g       |                     |                             |
J       |                     |                             |
u       |                     |                             |
l       |                     |                             |
J       |                     |                             |
u       |                     |                             |
n       |                     |                             |
M       |                     |                             | -->
a       |                     |                             |
y       |                     |                             |
A       |                     |                             | BM    65      59(58)
p       |                     | GG    63+        (64)66      | BM    64"     57(62)
r       |                     |                             |
M       |                     |                             | GG    63      (68)66
a       |                     | BM    61-     56(58)        |
r       |                     |                             | GG    63+     (69)66
        |                     | BM    /56"    56(61)        |
F       |                     |                             | GG    62"     (67)60
e       |                     | BM    /57     58(64)        |
b       |                     |                             | GG    >61-    (70)69
J       |                     | BM    >59        (65)67      |
a       |                     |                             |
n       |                     | GG    65-        (65)66      |
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EQUIFORM™ Pg: 77   **CATHODE   (120)**

9TH SA1 FEBRUARY 4 - 1 MILE TURF

	2		3	
D				
e	HO	64	(62) 44	
c				
b			-->	
J				
a				
n			SA -70+	(54) -

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 6   **TAKE MY NOTE   (120)**

1ST SA1 APRIL 16 - 1 1/8 MILES TURF

	2		3	
p			-->	
r			SA -70	(55) -
M				

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 24   **CHEROKEE KIM   (120)**

3RD SA1 MARCH 10 - 1 1/8 MILES TURF

	2		3	
a				
r			-->	
F			SA -70-	(52) -
e				
b				
J				
a				
n			SA 69	64 (66)

Surface Return or Resurface

Dirt to turf is a different story than first time turf. This situation arises when a horse that has already had one or more grass races and is returning to the turf after racing on the dirt. If a horse's initial effort(s) on the turf were substandard (lower than his usual dirt numbers), look to see if its recent dirt spreads have tightened (or reversed) in the interim. Look for the same pattern with horses that have run well previously on the turf and are now returning after a sequence of dirt races.

Straight A Student (page 135) entered in the fourth race at Hialeah Park on March 31, 2001, illustrates the concept. His last four dirt spreads leading into the upcoming grass race were 1, -2, -5, and -12. With proven back turf ability, and picture perfect conditioning, Straight A Student rolled home at \$7.40.

If it looks like a horse prefers grass and is returning to that surface, a new pace top on the dirt preceding the surface switch, is powerful. By running well early on a surface that is not his favorite, the horse will usually respond favorably when placed back on the grass.

Dyna's Club (page 136) had shown a preference for the grass right from the start. Her first try on the surface came after a 3-point final top of 72+ on the dirt. We would expect a reasonable bounce off that effort, but the fact that she ran a 72- in her initial turf attempt was the first sign that this might be her preferred surface. When placed in a turf route in her next start, she ran a 75+.

For some reason, Dyna's Club began her 4yo season on the dirt, and turned in two weak efforts. But in her next six races, all on the grass, she ran 72-74 finals, again demonstrating she relished the turf. In her first two races of 2001, she caught good and yielding turf courses, something she had yet to encounter, and ran weak races against graded stakes company. Had she lost her good form, had the competition been too tough, or were the off turf courses the culprit? The dirt sprint on February 24th provided the answer for Equiform users regarding her current condition. The new dirt pace top (80) signaled this mare was ready for a peak effort. When placed back on her favored surface by trainer Ron Ellis (11/35 at the meet), jockey Chris McCarron gave her a masterful front-end ride, winning a head bob at \$16.40 while earning

a 74".

After two dull races on the dirt to begin her career, Soixante Dix (page 137) improved eight points to a 65 when first placed on the grass. Trainer James Toner left her in New York for the winter, and Soixante Dix worked her way up to a 64-3/4 on the dirt, while tightening her spreads (12, 11, 1, 0). This was ideal preparation for a return to her preferred surface. On April 21, 2001, Toner placed her in a $35,000 claimer on the Aqueduct turf and she responded with a 69, paying $34.80.

Another powerful dirt to turf angle involves a horse that runs a dirt reversal immediately preceding the turf race. This applies to both first-time grass horses and horses returning to the turf. For a dramatic illustration of this concept, look at the 9th race at the Fairgrounds on March 26, 2001. The three betting favorites were Sarah Lane's Oates (6/5), Marie's Star (2/1), and Another Grey Lady (5/1) (pages 138−140). The favorite had tailed off in her last three races and was coming off a seven-week layoff. Marie's Star hadn't been on the grass in over two years, had never hit the board in three previous grass attempts and had weak turf breeding. Another Grey Lady had run a 72- grass final at Louisiana Downs the previous September, but hadn't gotten back to that figure in her last six races. None of the top three choices exhibited any positive conditioning patterns.

Now look at Sparkles of Luck (page 141). She had peaked with a 71+ at Lone Star in May 2000, and hung the first defeat on the much ballyhooed Hallowed Dreams in August. Her two previous turf efforts had been acceptable. In fact, her first time on the surface, she earned a 68", better than she had ever run on the dirt at that point. After the Hallowed Dreams race, she was laid off for over three months. She ran a cyclical pace top on February 15, 2001, and then came the key race, a dirt reversal to a 68+. This late distribution of energy was the ideal prep for a return to the grass. It appeared that a 71 or 72 final number would give her a chance, and the reversal suggested that Sparkles of Luck was likely to get back to that area now. Even though she was four pounds overweight at 114, she was still in receipt of 1.6 points from Sarah Lane's Oates at 122. I made her true chances around 10/1, and when I made my wagers at a minute to post (which is more like

four minutes at the Fairgrounds), she was 35/1 and rising. In addition to a win/place bet, I boxed her with the favorite in the exacta, and played a trifecta rundown combining these two in the first and second slots with the whole field.

My confidence in the play was shaken a bit when Sparkles of Luck broke through the gate before the start. But after being collared, she calmly reloaded, and with a ground-saving trip from Gerald Melancon, got the jump on the fast-closing Sarah Lane's Oates to win by a nostril at 44/1. The exacta came back $286 and the trifecta $8,611 when a long shot ran third.

Although we discussed some turf to dirt angles in the General Principles chapter, here is one that combines a turf pace low with a return to the main track.

Look at El Nativo's last race as a 3 year old (page 142), where he ran a turf pace low coupled with a lifetime best 22-point turf spread. Entered in a dirt route at Santa Anita on February 1, 2001, and making his third start off an eight-month layoff, El Nativo was primed for a top effort. He had run a 68" on the main track earlier in his career, which compared favorably with the turf numbers he was running at that time, so he rated to transfer his current good form to the dirt without a hitch. At 11/1, he was a solid wager and returned $24.00.

After beginning his career with two compression lines, Lucount (page 143) threw in a clunker in the mud. He began his three year-old season with two more dirt races, getting to a 63 final top in February. Placed on the grass for his next two starts, Lucount ran a 63/66- and 44/63. Though not a TD line, the 19-point spread in his last race to a turf pace low was encouraging. Also, Lucount was not bred that well for the turf, so he figured to run better than a 66- on the dirt (always keep these preferences in mind when evaluating surface switches with lightly raced horses).

On May 31, 2001 at Belmont Park, Lucount was entered in a 1-1/16 mile dirt race for maiden claimers. The deserving although overbet favorite in the race was Freddy's Dream (page 144) at even money. In addition to his concealed conditioning, Lucount was dropping from a maiden special weight race, had some bullet dirt drills sprinkled in his workout line, and figured to be a good price. Freddy's Dream was

running in the 67 area, and I felt Lucount had a chance to reach that number in this race. A few minutes to post Lucount's odds were 20/1 and climbing. Then, I realized who the trainer was – John P Campo Jr, who was 1 for 51 on the year. All of sudden, I got cold feet, and second-guessed my analysis. I just couldn't bring myself to bet such a plodder in a maiden claimer with a trainer mired in a long drought. Even though I knew Lucount was in decent form, I passed the race.

When the gates opened, Freddy's Dream ducked inward and careened into the rail, losing all chance, while Lucount contested the early pace and dug in resolutely in the stretch to win at 36/1. This is the kind of surprise that reminds one that, for the most part, horses win races - not jockeys or trainers or tips or statistics. If I didn't know Campo Jr was the trainer, I would have made this horse 6/1 based on his raw ability. Even knowing that Campo Jr was the trainer, I should have made him 12/1 or so.

Had he broken cleanly, Freddy's Dream may very well have won the race (he finished fourth, beaten six lengths). But the gods were smiling on Lucount this day, and only after the race did I glance at some trainer statistics. Over the last couple of years, Campo Jr was 4/24 or 17% with the turf to dirt move, which was much better than his overall win percentage. I took the rest of the day off.

Coming off a new pace top on January 11, 2001, Ragtime Tune (page 145) exploded to a 66 in her first route attempt. She then bounced to a 63", and after a couple of brief layoffs tried grass for the first time on April 27, running a 65/63". In her next start, she showed good condition by running a 53/63", creating a TD line. Placed back on the dirt on May 25, she rated to move back toward her 66 dirt top. She only ran a 64-3/4, but still prevailed returning $16.80.

Now that we know the patterns that predict improved grass performance, we would like to expound on some other observations concerning turf racing.

First of all, horses tend to "bounce" less violently off big grass efforts. The fact that turf horses distribute their energy more evenly, coupled with the more forgiving nature of the surface (less concussive strain), allows them to run more consistent final numbers. The corollary to this phenomenon is that the conservation of energy makes for

more clustered finishes. Accordingly, a big edge in final numbers is more significant on the turf. A horse with a two point final number advantage on the dirt is not as formidable as a horse with the same advantage on the turf.

As we do not normalize pace numbers, turf marathons can often produce very low pace numbers. When evaluating a TPL or a TD line, be cognizant of this, and be sure to base your analysis on races run at similar distances (an 1/8th of a mile or less of each other). The same holds true for horses that have a mix of turf routes and sprints. Compare only the route races in the sequence (note - we treat 7 and 7-1/2 furlong turf races around two turns as routes). Also remember that when evaluating dirt pace tops and turf pace lows, only compare pace numbers on each specific surface (dirt vs. dirt and turf vs. turf).

Turf sprints can be quite daunting for many figure handicappers, but we have found them to offer some good opportunities if certain precepts are followed. The key is to identify what profiles are winning at a particular track. Then look for patterns on The Xtras that typify these profiles.

A pronounced final number edge is certainly worth playing at the right price, but more often, the value is to be found elsewhere. The 5-1/2 furlong races at Hollywood Park sometimes favor early speed, especially when the course gets very dry. In this case, a new pace top on the turf can be a positive sign. The about 6-1/2 furlong turf races at Santa Anita are another matter. Here, the unique configuration of the course favors horses that have already negotiated it successfully and/or mid-post routers with competitive final numbers on TD lines.

Although most figure makers utilize the projection method in "creating" their figures, Equiform parts company with this dubious practice. Its practitioners are often forced to "fudge" their final numbers due to the influence of pace.

As an example, on September 9, 2000, two turf races were run over the Belmont inner turf course, one a NW1 allowance race, the other the Grade I Man O'War Stakes. In the allowance race, I was fortunate enough to back Understood, who paid $64 after being awarded first place on a disqualification. The fractions for that 1-1/4 mile race were 23.66, 48.29, 1:13.78, 1:39.08 and 2:04.28. The Man O'War, run a few

races later at 1-3/8 miles, went in 25.54, 50.94, 1:16.14, 1:41.04, 2:05.47, and 2:17.44. Formal Consent, the disqualified top horse in the allowance race earned a Beyer figure of 91, while the winner of the stakes race, Fantastic Light, was rewarded with a 106. The relationship of these final numbers makes no sense.

Although running his final eighth of a mile in a shade under 12 seconds, Fantastic Light was a head behind the leader's ten-furlong split of 2:05:47. Formal Consent ran the same ten furlongs in 2:04.28, and a horse of his caliber would usually require about 13 seconds to negotiate an extra eighth of a mile at this particular turf distance, for roughly the same final time as Fantastic Light. On The Xtras, Fantastic Light earned a 43/76- and Formal Consent a 51/74". On a final number basis, they ran about the same race, with most of the difference due to Fantastic Light carrying 126 pounds versus 121 for Formal Consent (remember, 5 pounds = 1 final number point).

As Beyer does not incorporate weight into his numbers, the 15-point difference between the final numbers is even more egregious. I have witnessed the same projection methods in operation with the turf figures of other services. As best as I can determine, the rationale for this practice is that they just can't fathom giving a NW1 allowance horse the same figure as a Grade I Stakes horse. They know the stakes horse is better, but their only recourse is the final number. At Equiform we have no such inhibitions or limitations. The distribution between the pace and final numbers solves the mystery.

I have no doubt that Fantastic Light would demolish Formal Consent in a turf marathon. Not because his final number is better, but rather that he ran a 33 point spread between his pace and final number compared to 23 for Formal Consent. Fantastic Light has demonstrated a sizable edge in finishing ability, and that is usually decisive in marathon grass races. In fact, at 1-1/4 miles and up on the grass, always give consideration to the horses with the best turf spreads even if their final numbers look a little light, as the final numbers are often just a function of the pace.

On February 9, 2001, two races were run at one mile over the Santa Anita turf course. The first race went 48.88 for the half with a final time of 1:34.97. The second one went in 45.92 and 1:35.13. The winner

of the first one carried one pound less in weight. As Maxwell Smart used to say, would you believe that the winner of the first race received a Beyer figure 18 points higher than the winner of the second race? No, we find that hard to believe. How about 12 points? No, we find that hard to believe. How about 10 points since the winner was Hawksley Hill, who once almost won the Breeders Cup Mile? We don't think so.

What we do think is that due to the very slow pace in the first race, the Beyer figures in that event were inflated. Thus, the 18 point differential. On The Xtras, Hawksley Hill ran a 58/74 and Dr Park, the winner of the second one-mile turf race, ran a 78/74-. On a final number basis, they ran about the same, but the turf spreads (-4 for Dr Park and +16 for Hawksley Hill) varied dramatically. Hey Chief, I think Control should start using The Xtras. By the way, Chief, what are The Xtras?

Lest you think this projection business is limited to turf races, think again. As a poignant example, consider the 1989 Forego Handicap. Defending champion Quick Call (a noted Saratoga horse for the course), with Pat Day at the controls, was allowed to set a dawdling pace of 47 and change for the first half mile. There were some good sprinters behind him, and though they flew home, they could not catch the Spa specialist.

Mark Hopkins, then doing the Beyer numbers for the major New York tracks, wrote an article in the *Racing Form* regarding the difficulty he had in assigning a figure for the race. If he took the final time at face value, and gave it the same variant as the other sprints, he would have given Grade 2 stakes horses, that frequently earned triple digit Beyers, figures in the low 90's. It didn't "feel" right to him, so he made a separate variant for the Forego, thus inflating the final numbers 10 points or so. If ever there was a case where pace made the race, this was it, even though it was a premier event at venerable Saratoga.

Equiform has no need to make such "guesses". We report what actually occurred and let the distribution between the pace and final numbers tell the story.

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 56   **STRAIGHT A STUDENT   (119)**   THE XTRAS™

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8TH HIA APRIL 16 - 1 1/8 MILES TURF
```

	3		4		5	
D e c			CR	65+	63(66)	
N o v						
O c t						
S e p			DE	71-	66(66)	
A u g			DE =.73		(54)=	
J u l			DE	=69+	(53)=	
J u n			DE	=73-w	(65)=	
			DE	=71-	(60)=	
M a y			DE	/67+	72(79)	
			DE	67-	62(62)	
A p r	HI	63	65(68)67	-->		
			TA	=67"	(59)=	HI =^71"w ( )=
M a r	TA	64"w	(65)56	TA	69-w	61(61)
				TA	67+	(74)66
F e b	GP	61	60(62)			
				GP	70	61(58)
				GP	^66"	58(61)
J a n				GP	62"	59(60)

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7TH SAX MARCH 16 - 1 MILE TURF
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	3		4		5
D					
e					
c					
N			HO =73+	(69)=	
o			HO =74"	(72)=	
v					
O	SA =75+	(72)=			
c			SA =73-	(73)=	
t	SA =72-	(74)=			
S					
e	EM 72+	70 (74)			
p					
A			DM =72+	(68)=	
u	EM 69+	62 (65)	DM =73+	(70)=	
g	EM >66+	65 (69)			
J			DM =73+w	(70)=	
u					
l					
	EM 66+	67 (75)			
J					
u	EM 69+w	68 (70) 67	HO 67+	66 (72) 69	
n					
M	EM 68-w	(74) 75			
a			HO 65"	(69) 57	
y	EM 68	68 (75) 79			
A					
p	EM 60+	(59) 50			
r					
M					
a					-->
r					
F					SA >73-	73 (80) 78
e					
b					GG =.72	(67)
ū̄					
a					SA =^70"	(66)
n̄					

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 25   **SOIXANTE DIX**   **(117)**   THE XTRAS™

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4TH AQU APRIL 21 - 1 MILE TURF
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	2		3		
D e c					
N o v					
O c t	**BE =65**	**(62)=**			
t	BE 57- $_{60}$(72)$_{77}$				
S e p					
A u g	SR 57" (61)$_{71}$				
J u l					
J u n					
M a y					
A p r			-->		
M a r			AQ /65-w (65)$_{62}$		
F e b			**AQ 61- $_{57}$(62)**		
b			AQ 58- (69)$_{69}$		
J a n			AQ 59+ (71)$_{69}$		

SARAH LANE'S OATES   (122)

9TH FGX MARCH 26   STATE-BRED - 1 MILE ABOUT TURF

	5	6	7
Dec		FG =^70- (65)=	
	FG =71+ (62)=	FG =74w (75)=	
Nov	FG 71" 64 (66)	FG =70+ (57)=	
Oct	LD =72-w (58)=	LD =73" (61)=	
Sep	LD =72+ (59)=		
	LD =72+ (57)=	LD =74-w (62)=	
Aug		LD =74- (61)=	
Jul		LD =73+ (59)=	
	LD =70+ (57)=	LD =74+w (63)=	
Jun			
May	LS =:71+ (58)=	LS =71" (53)=	
	LS =70+ (56)=		
Apr	LS =72 (55)=	LS =75"w (72)=	
Mar	FG =73-w (61)=	FG =73w (68)= -->	
	FG =71 (53)=	FG =72+ (61)=	
Feb		FG =72"w (61)=	
	FG =^73+ ()=		FG =72+ (69)
Jan	FG =73+w (61)=	FG =71- (52)=	FG =71 (63)
	FG =^73" (61)=		

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 88   **MARIE'S STAR**   **(113)**   THE XTRAS™
9TH FGX MARCH 26   STATE-BRED - 1 MILE ABOUT TURF

D/e/c/N/o/v/O/c/t/S/e/p/A/u/g/J/u/l/J/u/n/M/a/y/A/p/r/M/a/r/F/e/b/J/a/n	5	6	7
		CD /69+ $_{67}$(72)$_{74}$	
		EP 69" $_{67}$(72)	
		CD 71w $_{67}$(70)	
		CD 72w $_{70}$(78)	
		KE 71w $_{70}$(73)$_{72}$	
			-->
		FG 70+ (73)$_{77}$	FG /69"w $_{65}$(71)
		FG 68-w (70)$_{73}$	
		FG 63"w (67)$_{69}$	
		FG 64+ (68)$_{70}$	
		FG /67- (64)$_{63}$	
			FG ^68+w (68)$_{64}$
		FG 66+ (67)$_{73}$	

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 87   **ANOTHER GREY LADY**   **(116)**   THE XTRAS™

9TH FGX MARCH 26   STATE-BRED - 1 MILE ABOUT TURF

	3	4	5
Dec	FG 66- 66 (72)	FG 68" 68 (71)	
Nov	FG 64+ 68 (77)		
	LD 70-w 68 (76)		
Oct	LD =67w (73)$=$	LD 70- 69 (71)	
Sep	LD 58+ (70)$_{77}$	LD =67- (67)$=$	
	LD 54" (72)$_{78}$	LD =72- (70)$=$	
Aug	LD 57" (73)$_{79}$	LD =71-w (71)$=$	
	LD 59 64 (77)$_{79}$		
Jul	LD 56+ (72)$_{81}$	LD 69 70 (80)	
	LD 54" (66)$_{76}$	LD 70" 71 (74)$_{72}$	
	LD 59+ (74)$_{82}$	LD =68"w (67)$=$	
Jun			
May		EV 63" 65 (71)	
Apr		EV *68+* (78)$_{74}$	
Mar		FG =69" (71)$=$	-->
		FG ^69-w 61 (65)	
		FG 67- (64)$_{61}$	FG /68+ 66 (73)
		FG 69w 64 (69)	
Feb		FG 66" 63 (69)	FG 66+ (73)$_{76}$
Jan	HU 61 (66)$_{64}$	FG =67" (65)$=$	FG =70+w (69)

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 90 **SPARKLES OF LUCK (110)** THE XTRAS™

9TH FGX MARCH 26   STATE-BRED - 1 MILE ABOUT TURF

	2		3		4	
Dec			FG /66+	(77)$_{80}$		
			FG =67"	( )=		
Nov			FG ^62	(75)$_{81}$		
Oct						
Sep						
Aug			EV 70-w	(87)$_{96}$		
Jul			LD 67	(78)$_{82}$		
			LS 67- 69	(80)$_{81}$		
Jun	EV 58-	(66)$_{79}$				
May	EV 64-	(67)$_{77}$	LS 71+	(83)$_{85}$		
			LS =68"	(65)=		
Apr			**LS 67-w**	**( )**		
Mar			FG 67"	(78)$_{90}$ -->		
			FG 67"	(76)$_{80}$		
					FG /68+ 64	**(67)**
Feb			FG 66"	(78)$_{84}$	FG 64	(78)$_{85}$
Jan			FG ^68-w	(72)$_{72}$		

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 27   **EL NATIVO   (117)**   THE XTRAS™

```
4TH SAX FEBRUARY  1 - 1 MILE DIRT
            2                         3                    4
D                           SA    =67"      (45)=
e  CR   =^67+     (63)=      HO    =70"      (64)=
c
N  CR    =68      (59)=
o
v
O  CR        59+   60(62)61
c  CR       /61-   62(71)72
t
S
e  CR       /61     (69)68
P  CR       61-     (65)68
A
u
g
J
u
l
J
u
n
M
a
y
A                           GP    =67        (49)=
p                           GP    =69+       (59)=
r
M
a
r
F
e
b                                                      -->
J
a                           GP       61-   57(61)
n                           GP       68"   64(68)
```

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 11   **LUCOUNT**   **(117)**   THE XTRAS™

```
2ND BEL MAY 31 - 1 1/16 MILES DIRT
```

	2		3	
D				
e				
c				
N	AQ \53 58(61)			
o				
v				
O	AQ 62" 61(65)			
c	BE 60- 60(60)			
t				
S				
e				
p				
A				
u				
g				
J				
u				
l				
J				
u				
n				
M			-->	
a			BE *=63* *(44)=*	
y				
A			AQ =66- (63)=	
p				
r				
M				
a				
r				
F			AQ 63 58(59)	
e				
b				
J				
a				
n			AQ 60- 50(50)	

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 9 **FREDDY'S DREAM   (117)** THE XTRAS™

`2ND BEL MAY 31 - 1 1/16 MILES DIRT`

	2	3		

```
D
e
c
N
o CD      62        59(69)74
v
O
c
t
S
e
p
A
u
g SR      \54"      (68)74
J
u
l
J
u
n
M                    -->
a                    BE    67        64(68)
y
A
p                    AQ    66"       65(64)
r
M
a                    HI    =63+      ( )=
r
F                    GP    =64+      (63)=
e
b
J
a
n
```

EQUIFORM™ Pg: 10   **RAGTIME TUNE (118)**   THE XTRAS™

2ND BEL MAY 25 - 1 MILE DIRT

	2		3		
D AQ	57+	(68)70			
e					
c					
N					
o					
v					
O					
c					
t					
S					
e					
p					
A					
u					
g					
J					
u					
l					
J					
u					
n					
M		-->			
a		BE	=63"	(53)=	
y					
A		AQ	=63"	(65)=	
p					
r					
M		AQ	51"	58(69)	
a					
r					
F					
e					
b		AQ	63"	61(65)	
J		AQ	66w	63(70)	
a		AQ	58	(73)77	
n					